

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION:

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1-4 and 10 have been amended, and claim 11 has been added. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-11 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

AMENDMENT TO CLAIM 10

Claim 10 has been amended to insert a period after the numeral "10" to correct the typographical error.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DRAWINGS:

In the Office Action, at page 2, numbered paragraph 1, the drawings were objected to.

It is respectfully submitted that FIG. 7 shows the features of the invention recited by the Examiner. In FIG. 7, the third input I2 is connected at a node between the first node N1 and the second node N2; and the third output O2 is connected between the first node N1 and the second node N2, as is recited in claim 8. Note that the third output O2 is **not** recited to be connected to the **same** node between the first node and the second node, but rather is described as being connected **between** the first node and the second node (as is shown in FIG. 7). Thus, it is respectfully submitted that no drawing corrections are needed, and the outstanding drawing objections are resolved.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding objections to the drawings are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112:

In the Office Action, at pages 2-3, numbered paragraph 3, claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for the reasons set forth therein. This rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

It is respectfully submitted that, since the third output O2 is **not** recited to be connected to the **same** node between the first node and the second node, but rather is simply connected **between** the first node and the second node (as is shown in FIG. 7), it is clear that claim 8 is not indefinite. FIG. 7 clearly shows that the third input I2 and the third output O2, are coupled, respectively, between the first node N1 and the second node N2. Thus, claim 8 is submitted to be clear and to be allowable under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102:

In the Office Action, at page 3, numbered paragraph 5, claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kudou et al. (USPN 5,173,626; hereafter Kudou et al.). This rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Claims 1-4 have been amended.

It is respectfully submitted that Kudou et al. discloses a flip-flop circuit that includes six inverters 26-31 and three multiplexers 23-25. The enable signal E and /E and the test enable signal T and /T are supplied to the gates of the multiplexers 23-25. The outputs of the multiplexers 23-25 are connected to the same node. In contrast, in the present invention (see independent claims 1, 2, 3, and 4), the input terminal used for normal operation and the input terminal used for test operation are connected to different nodes. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claims 1-4 recite a latch circuit that is connected differently from, and operates in a different manner than, the invention of Kudou et al.

Hence, it is respectfully submitted that amended claims 1-4 are not anticipated by Koudou et al. (USPN 5,173,626) and are not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) by Kudou et al. (USPN 5,173,626).

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner stated that claim 8 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections(s) under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

It is respectfully submitted that, in view of the explanations above, claim 8 is clear and thus is allowable under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

The Examiner also stated that claims 9-10 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Since claim 8 is submitted to be allowable, claims 9-10 are submitted to be allowable for at least the reasons that claim 8 is submitted to be allowable.

In addition, the Examiner stated that claims 5-7 were allowed.

NEW CLAIM

New claim 11 recites that the features of the present invention include a latch circuit, comprising: a first inverter including an input and an output; a second inverter including an input and an output, the output of the first inverter being connected to the input of the second inverter; a third inverter including an input and an output, the output of the second inverter being connected to the input of the third inverter; a fourth inverter including an input and an output, the output of the third inverter being connected to the input of the fourth inverter at a first node; a fifth inverter including an input and an output, the output of the fourth inverter being connected to the input of the fifth inverter; and a sixth inverter including an input and an output, the output of the fifth inverter being connected to the input of the sixth inverter, the output of the sixth inverter being connected to the input of the first inverter at a second node; and wherein a first input is connected at the second node, a second input is connected at the first node, a third input is connected at a node excluding the first node and the second node, a first output is connected at the second node, a second output is connected at the first node and a third output is connected at another node excluding the first node and the second node.

Nothing in the prior art teaches or suggests this latch circuit. It is submitted that this new claim distinguishes over the prior art.

CONCLUSION:

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot, and further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any remaining issues to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview to discuss resolution of such issues.

If there are any underpayments or overpayments of fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge and/or credit the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date:

August 12, 2004

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